INTERSECTION OF DISABILITY AND ABUSE

APRIL 11, 2022
WELCOME

ASL, captions, and language interpreters will be provided today.
EFFECTIVE & INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

• Verify that your microphone is muted when others are speaking during the meeting.
• Always speak slowly and clearly.
• Utilize the “raise hand” or chat feature for your questions and comments.
• Always take turns when speaking.
SCHEDULE

Training #1 – March 21 (Housing)

Training #2 - April 11 (The intersection of disability and abuse)

Training #3 – May 23 (Technology and effective communication)
This training is brought to you by the Enable Project, a coalition that brings together non-profit and social justice organizations and their staff to create channels for integration of people with disabilities within their organizations and movements.
MINDFULNESS

Chaplain Beyssa Buil

Introduction -
Creating a safe space for triggering discussions
A place to be seen and heard

Website: www.greyteakettle.com
Email: chaplainbeyssa@greyteakettle.com
This will be a safe place.
This will be a sacred and holy place.
A place without time.
A place where we are all welcome.
Feel seen, heard and supported.
SPEAKERS

Deborah Dietz, DIG
MIA Liaisons (Genesis, Kat, Carmen, & Rachel)
Chaplain Beyssa Buil
Retired Judge Rosa Figarola
Nilo A. Cuervo, Office of the State Attorney
INTRODUCTION
MIAMI INCLUSION ALLIANCE (MIA)

MIA YouTube Channel
people with disabilities are more likely to experience abuse than people without them
REMEMBER

If you are triggered, we are here to help and listen.
VIDEO 4

(HTTPS://YOUTUBE/-C2ILJXB3NI)
The Link Between Domestic Violence and Animal Cruelty

April 11, 2022

- Presenter:
  - Rosa Figarola
  - Retired Circuit Court Judge
  - Eleventh Judicial Circuit Miami-Dade County
Learning Objectives

1. Understand the human/animal “bond”
2. Understand the link between interpersonal violence and animal abuse
3. Understand the significance of recognizing the link in order to promote safer and healthier environments for humans and their animal companions
For purposes of this presentation, concepts and resources apply to:
• Elders
• Persons with disabilities
• Vulnerable and at-risk adults

• The terms will be used interchangeably to include all groups
The Link

Understanding Link is understanding link
- between an elder and their pet and generations in a family
- between inhumane treatment of animals and inhumane treatment of elders
- between the agencies and individuals concerned about the welfare of elders, the safety of the community, and fair and equal justice for all involved
What do we know about the link between humans and animals?
Pets influence the lives of elders

- Positively impact physical health and reduce stress
- Gives the elder something to “care about” and “care for”
- Elders look to their pets for support, comfort & security
- Pets provide greater life satisfaction
- Pets help elders cope better with loss and grief
- Benefits of therapy pets in nursing homes
Domestic Violence and Pets

- For many battered survivors, pets may be a significant source of emotional and social support and buffers against the aggression surrounding them.
- Companion animals may provide physical protection from the abuser.
- While survivors frequently excuse their batterers’ actions upon themselves, they may find it harder to ignore acts of violence against animals.
Human-Animal Bond

- The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors essential to the health and wellbeing of both.
- This includes, among other things, emotional, psychological, and physical interactions of people, animals, and the environment.
What do we know about the link between animal cruelty and all forms of interpersonal violence?
Significance of Recognizing the Bond and Link to Abuse

Animal Abuse is the “tip of the iceberg” and is often the first sign of other forms of violence.
Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence

DV batterers may specifically choose pets as targets because they believe law enforcement doesn’t care and/or they can get away with it.

More than half of DV survivors report delaying escape from an abusive partner out of fear for their companion animal.
The “Original” Domestic Violence Power and Control Wheel

The “wheel” can apply to all forms of violence against humans and animals

- Violence is
- Violence is
- Violence
Tactics used by abusers in Elder Abuse situations


• Physical abuse
• Sexual abuse
• Psychological and emotional abuse
• Targets vulnerabilities & neglects
• Ridicules personal & cultural values and denies access to spiritual & traditional events
• Misleads, excludes and prevents access to family members
• Isolates
• Uses privilege
• Exploits financially
• Threatens
Additional Factors Impacting Violence

Guns
COVID
Natural Disasters
Guns

• Over half of all intimate partner homicides are committed with guns
• A victim is five times more likely to be murdered when her abuser has access to a gun
COVID-19

- Increased difficulty investigating cases
- Difficulty and delays in placements when relocation is necessary
- Extended hospital stays because assisted living facilities won’t take them
- Reduction of available placement
- Adult day care facilities are closed
- Doctors doing “remote” visits
- Increase in emotional and financial abuse
Not just COVID ...

Vulnerable humans and animals are also affected by:
  • Natural Disasters
    • Hurricanes
    • Fire
    • Floods
  • Unexpected financial challenges
  • Ripple effect of stay-at-home and social distancing mandates
The “Power and Control Wheel” of Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence

Isolation: Refusing to allow her to take her pet to her vet. Prohibiting her from socializing her dog with other dogs.

Threats: To harm or kill her pet if she leaves or asserts any independence.

Legal Abuse: Custody battles over pets. Filing theft charges if she leaves with the pet.

Denying & Blaming: Blaming her or the pet for his cruelty. Killing the pet and saying it didn’t matter because the pet was old.

Emotional abuse: Disappearing, giving away or killing pets to take away her source of unconditional love. Forced participation in animal sexual abuse.

Economic Abuse: Refusing to allow her to spend money on pet food or vet care.

Intimidation: Harming or killing pet: “Next time it’ll be you…” Targeting pets of family/friends who aid her escape.

Using Children: Harming/killing children’s pets to intimidate them. Blaming the “disappearance” of the family pet on her to create a wedge between her and the children.
EXPLOITING THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND:

- Pets become pawns in the dynamic of power and control
- Animals may be threatened, tortured, killed, or denied care
- Animals may be used as an instrument for power and control, or may be used as tools of financial exploitation or extortion
- Perpetrator’s actions may be selfish, retaliatory, or based on frustration of caregiving
- Jealousy over service animal or emotional support animal
- Animals can be taken away, allowed to escape or sent to animal shelters to be euthanized as ways to intimidate the victim.
• Batterers who also abuse animals are more dangerous and use more forms of controlling and violent behaviors
  • 76% of DV victims whose partners had histories of pet abuse had been strangled
  • 26% had been forced to have sex with suspect
  • 80% feared they would be killed by the suspect
Over 71% of battered women reported that their batterer had harmed, killed or threatened animals to coerce, control and intimidate them.
One caseworker’s account:

“Her decision to go to the hospital depended on what happened to her cat. Her recovery depended on the cat’s well being. So I had to find someone to care for her cat. I never thought that animal welfare would be a part of my job.”
• When **animals** are abused, **people** are at risk...
• When **people** are abused, **animals** are at risk.
DV INJUNCTION

➢ Temporary/permanent injunction can grant exclusive care, possession, control of animal owned, possessed, harbored, kept, or held by the petitioner, *the respondent*, or a minor child residing in the residence or household of the petitioner or respondent. *F.S. 741.30(7)(a)*

➢ Court *can order that Respondent* have no contact with animal and can prohibit Respondent from taking, transferring, encumbering, concealing, harming or otherwise disposing of animal. *F.S. 741.30(7)(a).*
DV Injunction

- Excludes animal owned for bona fide agricultural purpose or service animal if respondent is handler. *F.S. 741.30(a).*
  - Animal trained to perform tasks for individual with a disability. *F.S. 413.081*
- Court is required to consider whether respondent has intentionally hurt or killed family pet when determining whether there is reasonable cause to believe petitioner is in imminent danger of becoming victim of DV. *F.S. 741.30(B)*
Animals in the courtroom - F.S. 92.55(5)

- Permits a child, sexual battery victim or witness or person with intellectual disability, to testify with the assistance of therapy or facility dog.
- Court must consider relevant factors that would facilitate the testimony.
- “Facility dog”: a dog that is trained, evaluated and certified pursuant to industry standards and provides unobtrusive emotional support.
- “Therapy dog”: a dog that is trained, evaluated and certified pursuant to industry standards by an organization that certifies animals as appropriate to provide animal therapy.

- A disabled individual or an individual over 62 years old can keep “common” household pets in federally-assisted housing for elderly or disabled
- Pet deposits vary on rent subsidy
  - Are capped at $300 and can be paid in installments
Resources for elders with pets

• Be Proactive!
• Pet care services for elders or those with a chronic illness
• Types of services
• Veterinarians, Veterinary associations, Schools of Veterinary medicine
• Pet loss support groups and 24-hour hotlines
• Mobile groomers, pet sitters, doggie day care
Home

The Link

Over the past 30 years, researchers and professionals in a variety of human services and animal welfare disciplines have established significant correlations between animal abuse, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, elder abuse and other forms of violence. Mistreating animals is no longer seen as an isolated incident that can be ignored. It is often an indicator or predictor crime and a “red flag” warning sign that other family members in the household may not be safe.
Animal Cruelty Issues
What Juvenile and Family Court Judges Need to Know

Creating Safer Communities for Older Adults and Companion Animals
A Joint Effort of
The Humane Society of the United States, Washington, DC
and
The Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Disability and Elder Services
Genome of Aging and Long-Term Care Resources, Madison, WI
QUESTIONS
Thank you

Rosa Figarola

rosafigarola305@gmail.com
GUIDED BODY SCAN

Reset your nervous system and mindfulness

Reflect for one minute and observe what has come up for you it can be a physical sensation, a memory, emotion, a thought
Gun Violence and Domestic Crimes

Nilo A. Cuervo
Miami-Dade County (FL) State Attorney’s Office
### Homicides in Miami-Dade County

**Eleventh Judicial Circuit’s Miami-Dade County Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Death Review Team**

<table>
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<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Total # of Homicides in Miami-Dade County (DV &amp; Non-DV-Related) *</th>
<th>Total # of Domestic Violence-Related Homicides in Miami-Dade County</th>
<th>% of Domestic Violence-Related Homicides in Miami-Dade County</th>
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<td>2021**</td>
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DOMESTIC HOMICIDE FACTS

- More than twice as many women are killed by their husbands or boyfriends than are murdered by strangers.

- Firearms are frequent weapons leading to mortality rates of women killed by their spouses, boyfriends or others.
DOMESTIC HOMICIDE FACTS (CON’T)

• The effects of firearm-related domestic violence last long beyond the actual crime. Research on child witnesses of marital violence indicates that children who observed incidents of domestic violence involving the use or threat of a firearm exhibited higher levels of behavior problems than children who did not.
MORE FACTS

• Each year, an estimated 3.3 million children are exposed to violence by family members against their mothers or female caretakers.

• In homes where partner abuse occurs, children are 1,500 times more likely to be abused.

• 40-60% of men who abuse women also abuse children.
MORE FACTS (CON’T)

• When children are killed during a domestic dispute, 90% are under age 10, and 56% are under age 2.

• National research indicates that cities with procedures in place to study domestic violence-related deaths are successful in driving down their homicide rate.
OUR VISION

Smart, effective, and responsible justice

In other words, a criminal justice system where:

• Public safety is the most important priority
• We strive to prevent and deter crime
• We stay abreast of the research, including the emerging literature on neuroscience, and employ evidence-based practices
• We work with and prosecute people as individuals
• We systematically assess and address offenders’ criminogenic needs, rather than just their actions
• We maximize limited public resources

...............and we do so simultaneously
SMART JUSTICE WORKS!
PROBLEM SOLVING COURTS

• Drug Court

• Mental Health Court

• Veterans Court

• Diversion
SPECIALIZED UNITS

• Domestic Crimes Unit

• Gun Violence Reduction Initiative (GVRI)

• Gangs Unit

• Career Criminal Unit
SEALING AND EXPUNGING PROGRAM


- Over a decade ago, we started the “Second Chance” Program that helps people overcome the stigma that often accompanies an arrest or conviction by sealing and expunging their records according to law.

- We’ve hosted approximately 90 events since 2011 (an average of almost 10 per year), the year we began keeping records. During that time, over 13,000 people requested our assistance. Of that number, we identified over 7,000 eligible people and helped them with their applications.
As word has gotten out, our program has become increasingly popular. In 2019 alone, over 1,900 people requested our assistance, including over 1,200 who were eligible for relief.

Research shows that programs like ours can reduce recidivism and improve participants’ earning capacity.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER
DISCUSSION
ENABLE PROJECT
PARTNERS

- Catalyst Miami
- The Center for Independent Living of South Florida
- Disability Independence Group
- Advocacy Network on Disabilities
- Enable Project Advisors
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 14, 2022 – Public Hearing on the Tenant Bill of Rights

May 1 - 10, 2022 - 10 Days of Connection

May 5, 2022 – Lean on Me: An Inclusive Musical Experience

May 23, 2022 – Technology and Accessible Communication

CILSF Activities: https://www.cilsf.org/calendarofevents
PRESENTATION MATERIALS

https://www.justdigit.org/resources-2/

YouTube Channel – Enable Project Playlist
THANK YOU!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/enable041122